

in this particular area. This is the first step of a long process, I think, of water funding legislation that this Legislature will look at. Unfortunately, it just happened to be the first one. So I hope that you will keep an open mind on this particular issue of water funding. I think that there are other proposals that are equally meritorious, if not more meritorious than this one, and that we need to take a look at those as well before this particular package is ultimately passed.

SENATOR LABEDZ: Thank you, Senator Johnson. Before we go on to the closing, there are no other lights on, I would like to introduce some guests, under the south balcony, of Senator Rogers, his daughter Mrs. Roxanne Meyer and granddaughter, Michelle Meyer, from Omaha, and his granddaughter, Laci Rogers from Ord. Would you please stand and be recognized by the Legislature. Senator Schmit, there are no further lights on, would you like to close on the advancement of LB 148?

SENATOR SCHMIT: I will be brief, Mr. President, and I would just like to say that I also, in agreement with Senator Rod Johnson, hope that the meritorious bills that are in the Natural Resources Committee do come before this body, that we have a chance to work on them. I would hope also that we are not going to be relegated to the responsibility of funding water and soil conservation measures totally with property taxes and by the fee system. I would hope that there would still be some opportunity to raise some funds from the General Fund. I looked back this morning at the record and...for the many years we have been here, and I find tens of millions of dollars that have been saved because they have not appropriated funds to those responsibilities over the years. I recall when we passed LB 1106, which created the Water Management Board, we had visions of substantial amounts of money being allocated to that board. There have been criticisms of that board because they haven't done anything. Well, ladies and gentlemen, as I said many times, the best engine in the world won't run without fuel and we have not provided the fuel. I am under no illusion that this is going to resolve the problems of the natural resource districts, but I do believe that it will be somewhat of a help in some of those areas. Senator Rex Haberman refers to the problems of the counties and I am not unaware of those problems. I can recognize those problems and I hope that Senator Rex Haberman comes forward valiantly and vigorously and supports one of my bills which allows for the county to get into the sales tax business. I am sure that he will recognize the wisdom of